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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: KREMLIN HUMAN RIGHTS CHAIRWOMAN PROMISES NO
SUSPENSION OF NGO ACTIVITY

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Chairwoman of the Presidential Administration Council for Civil Society and Human Rights Ella Pamfilova emphatically assured Ambassador October 5 that "nothing would happen" to curtail the activities of NGOs not re-registered by the October 18 deadline. Pamfilova's office was monitoring the Federal Registration Service and planned a special October 18 session at which it would examine NGO registration status reports. Embassy next steps: Ambassador has raised the issue with Deputy Foreign Minister Yakovenko, and will continue to intercede with appropriate GOR interlocutors. Septel will report current NGO re-registration state-of-play.

¶2. (C) Pamfilova said there was no legislation pending or being drafted that would prevent foreign financing of NGOs. She traced recent interethnic violence to corruption, and agreed that President Putin should use the remainder of his term to tackle the problem. Pamfilova stressed the importance of U.S.-Russian cooperation in combating the Islamic threat. On Georgia, Pamfilova saw Saakashvili as "no democrat." End summary.

NGOs Will Stay in Business

¶3. (C) Ambassador opened his October 5 meeting with Presidential Administration Human Rights and Civil Society Chairwoman Ella Pamfilova by briefly describing his concern that the failure of international NGOs to be re-registered by the October 18 deadline could mean a suspension of their program activities until registered by the Federal Registration Service (FRS). Pamfilova, who was accompanied by Executive Secretary of the Presidential Council for Promoting the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights William Smirnov, noted that she had heard similar fears expressed by other international representatives. She said --repeatedly and emphatically-- that "nothing would happen" to NGOs not registered by October 18. Either the deadline would be extended, or the NGOs would otherwise be able to continue their activities until registered by the FRS.

¶4. (C) Pamfilova told the Ambassador that her Commission would hold a meeting on October 18 at which all information available at that time would be examined. If there were any problems, she would intercede with the appropriate government agencies and with the President, if necessary. Pamfilova said that she was in close contact with the FRS and would

remain in contact as the deadline approached. She again reassured the Ambassador that NGO activity would not be interrupted because of the October 18 deadline.

No Restrictive NGO Financing
Legislation on the Horizon

¶5. (C) The Ambassador told Pamfilova of rumors of pending legislation that would prohibit foreign contributions to NGOs working in Russia. Pamfilova ascribed the reports to the "political campaign," and insisted they were not true. Her office had met recently with select members of the Federation Council and the State Duma. There were, she repeated, no plans to introduce new legislation or modify existing laws.

Corruption Spawns Interethnic Violence

¶6. (C) September's interethnic violence in the Karelian city of Kondopoga had sparked increasing concerns about xenophobia and extremism in Russia, the Ambassador noted. Pamfilova ascribed the violence there, and elsewhere in Russia, to "a crisis of our law enforcement system." It was riddled with corruption, she said, and she argued that the "everything is for sale" atmosphere in local police forces spawned economic problems that mutated into interethnic ones. President Putin, Pamfilova agreed, must squarely address the problem, and her office planned to make its own modest contribution through an October 26 roundtable on xenophobia and intolerance.

¶7. (C) Pamfilova prescribed a draconian approach to

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corruption in Russia: "a purge that would cut the connections between government and organized crime." The fact that law enforcement agencies had been able so quickly to identify Georgian organized crime groups in the wake of recent problems with Tbilisi meant "the police know who they are and how they make their money." She agreed that President Putin should use the remainder of his term to tackle the problem, noting that corruption "affects all social strata," and that beginning the fight "would take the edge off of things."

¶8. (C) Pamfilova was less optimistic about prospects for stemming corruption in the Caucasus, noting that the region's ethnic patchwork and traditions made success there less likely. Federal "money is sent there, but never gets to the intended destination," she said.

Russian-Western Sparring Allows
Islamic Threat to Grow

¶9. (C) The meeting continued with an emotional monologue by Pamfilova about the Islamic threat. She cited the recent cancellation of a performance of an opera in Berlin for fear that it would offend Muslim sensibilities as evidence that "political correctness" was causing the West to "lose to Islam." "Anything can be a spark" for Muslim outrage, she said, even (the Russian poet) Pushkin. Disagreements between the U.S. and Russia are abetted by Islamic extremists. The West, Pamfilova contended, seemingly does not understand that the only solution is to join forces with Russia.

Georgia

¶10. (C) Pamfilova segued into an excoriation of Georgian President Saakashvili, "no democrat," who "understands the damage his actions are doing to Georgia and Georgians." She

deplored Saakashvili's personal attacks on President Putin.

Comment

¶11. (C) Pamfilova's unequivocal response to the Ambassador's concerns about the NGO re-registration process and her determination to remain in close contact with the FRS are cause for hope. The Ambassador has brought the same concerns to the attention of Deputy Foreign Minister Yakovenko and to others in the Presidential Administration. Septel will report on the registration status of international NGOs and preview further steps planned by the Embassy before the October 18 deadline.

BURNS